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ABSTRACT

This guide provides information on the Lao language and alphabet for teachers of English to ethnic Lao refugees. Twenty-seven English pronunciation lessons dealing with the particular problems of Lao speakers learning English are included. Lao words are written in a phonetic Roman alphabet. An annotated bibliography of resources is appended. (JB)

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Indochinese Refugee Education Guides

General Information Series #19

TEACHING ENGLISH TO THE LAO

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I. Introduction

The purpose of this Guide is to provide information on the Lao language and alphabet which will be of interest and use to Americans who are teaching English to the ethnic Lao refugees, and to provide English pronunciation lessons dealing with the particular problems Lao speakers have.

Throughout the guide, we will be giving examples of the Lao words and sentences. Except when discussing the Lao alphabet, we will list these examples in a phonetic alphabet (enclosed in []'s), rather than in the Lao alphabet: for example, the name of the ethnic group and language, which is written ลาว in the Lao alphabet, will be represented as [la:w^{1}]. The symbols and sounds will be explained in detail in the section on the sounds of Lao; for the moment, however, we should explain that the numbers to the right and above the syllables represent one or the

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other of the six tones in Lao, and that a colon indicates a long vowel. The system of transcription we are using is that of the text Spoken Lao, with some modifications to make it closer to the letters of the English alphabet.

In preparing this Guide, we have been helped by people across the country. We are grateful to Dr. J Milton Cowan, of Spoken Language Services in Ithaca, New York, for his help in finding materials; to the Lao staff and students at Arlington Career Center in Arlington, Virginia, for helping us field-test the pronunciation lessons; to Donna Vanderhoff at Arlington Career Center for compiling the lessons; and to Sam Mattix, of the Employment Opportunities Center in Seattle, Washington, and Khamchong Luangpraseut, of the Lao Family Community, Inc., in Santa Ana, California, for their extensive and insightful comments on the text and lessons.

II. The Ethnic Groups in Laos

The population of Laos is composed of several different ethnic groups, each major group with its own language and culture. For convenience, these groups are classified according to geography: the Lao Loum, the Lao Theung, and the Lao Sung. The Lao Loum are those living in the lowland areas in Laos, particularly around the Mekong River and its tributaries. Most Lao Loum are ethnic Lao, the subject of this Guide; the ethnic Lao comprise about half the population of Laos, and are the dominant political group. The Lao Theung, or "upper Lao", live in the higher river valleys; they are mostly groups speaking languages related to Cambodian, for example to Kha and Khmu. The Lao Sung live high in the mountains; ethnically, they are mostly Hmong and Yao, and speak languages related to Chinese. All these different people are Laotian citizens, however, in the same way that members of the Chinese community in San Francisco, or the Polish community in Chicago, are American citizens by virtue of having been born in the United States.

It has frequently happened, in the process of getting refugees out of the camps in Thailand and into American communities, that the ethnic identity of the Laotian refugees has gotten lost in the shuffle. In the absence of detailed information (especially when the refugees in the question don't speak English), sponsors have often assumed that their Laotian refugees are ethnic Lao, when in reality the refugees belong to one of the minorities and have a quite different language and culture.

With a few exceptions (notably some Thai Dam in Iowa and some Yao families in Oregon and Washington), the refugees from Laos to date (Summer, 1979) have been either ethnic Laos or Hmongs.* You can usually tell an ethnic Lao from a Hmong by his or her name: Lao names are usually poly-syllabic, where Hmong names are one-syllables. Here are some examples of Lao names:

Houmpheng Phetmongkhonh	Seng Aroun Phommarine
Somsangouane Luangsisomkham	Champa Soulatha
Samreung Singhavara	Bounmi Luangkhoth

and of Hmong names:

Vang Blia	Her Tou
Pa Yang	Hli Vue
Li Mai	Xiong Thao

to show you the difference.

As we mentioned before, this guide deals with the ethnic Lao. From here on, we will refer to all the refugees from Laos as Laotians, but will reserve the term Lao for the ethnic Lao, their language and culture.

III. The Lao Language

The Lao language is so similar to the language spoken in Thailand that many scholars consider them the same language, and refer to Laotian Thai and Siamese Thai accordingly. Lao is spoken natively by about a million and a half people in Laos (besides the minorities who have learned it as a second language), and by several million ethnic Lao living in northeast Thailand. Major sub-dialects of Lao spoken in Laos are the Vientiane dialect, the Louang Prabang dialect, and the Phouan dialect (spoken around Xieng Khouang).

As is typical of languages, the vocabulary of Lao contains words borrowed from other languages, speakers of which have had something to do with the history and culture of Laos. Notable sources of words are Sanskrit and Pali, the languages of Theravada Buddhism (the dominant religion among the Lao); Thai and Khmer, because of continued contact with Thailand and Cambodia; French, from Laos' being a French colony until 1953; and English, first from contact with the British in Thailand, and later from contact with Americans throughout the Indochina war.

* The National Indochinese Clearinghouse has published four Guides on the Hmongs in its General Information Series: #14, "The Hmong Language: Sounds and Alphabets"; #15, "The Hmong Language: Sentences, Phrases and Words"; #16, "Glimpses of Hmong Culture and Recent History in Laos"; and #17, "An Annotated Bibliography of Materials on the Hmongs of Laos".

Words borrowed from other languages into Lao are usually reshaped to conform more to the shape of native words. The word for America, for example, is pronounced [a^{1}me:^{1}li^{1}ka^{1}], with a long vowel in the second syllable and an [l] substituting for the English [r]. The word for English is pronounced [ang^{1}kit^{1}], with the [l] dropped and the [t] substituting for the final [sh].* [This reshaping is a standard occurrence among languages; our pronunciation of the word Lao, for example, is an English-ized version of the native [la:w^{1}], which has a long vowel (which English doesn't have), and of course a tone.)

A. The Sounds of Lao

In this section, we will talk about the sounds of the Louang Prabang dialect of Lao. (Remember that we are talking about sounds, not letters of the alphabet, which will be discussed in the next section.) The system we are using to represent Lao pronunciation is based on the one used in the book Spoken Lao, with a few modifications to keep the letters as close to their values in English as possible. You'll notice some unfamiliar symbols for vowels; Lao has more vowels than English has vowel letters, so additional symbols are necessary.

Native Lao words are of one syllable, with the syllable consisting of a vowel or diphthong, usually preceded by a consonant, and sometimes followed by one. Lao is a tone language, like Chinese and Vietnamese; each syllable has one or the other of six tones associated with its pronunciation. In fact, it's the tone that determines the syllable - syllables with diphthongs, for example, are considered to be single syllable because just one tone occurs across both the vowels. So the word [kua^{1}] 'fear' (which would be a two-syllabled word by our usual English definition) is considered to be a single syllable because there's only one tone associated with it.

Lao has twenty consonants. Eleven of them are pronounced pretty much like parallel consonants in English: [b], [d], [f], [s], [h], [m], [n], [ng]* (as in English sing), [l], [y], and [w] (which is sometimes pronounced [v]).

Lao has two different kinds of [p]'s, [t]'s and [k]'s, called aspirated and unaspirated. The aspirated varieties, which we will represent with a ' after the symbol (e.g. [p']), are pronounced with a puff of air. English has aspirated [p']'s, [t']'s, and [k']'s; you can feel the puff of air if you hold your hand

* The ‿ over the [ng], and in subsequent examples, is to remind you that the two symbols are being used to represent a single sound.

up to your mouth and say pill, tie, or key. The unaspirated varieties, which we will represent just by the letter (e.g. [p]), are pronounced without the puff of air. English has unaspirated [p]'s, [t]'s and [k]'s too, but only in consonant clusters like spill, still, and skill. We ordinarily don't notice the difference between aspirated and unaspirated consonants in English; but when we hear unaspirated [p], [t], and [k] out of the consonant cluster context, they sound like [b], [d], or [g] respectively. Which is what the Lao unaspirated consonants will sound like until you get used to them. Here are some examples:

[pa:^{1}] 'fish'	as opposed to	[p'a:^{1}] 'to lead'
[kam^{1}] 'penalty'		[k'am^{1}] 'gold'
[ta:^{1}] 'seal'		[t'a:^{1}] 'spread'

The aspirated [p']'s, [t']'s and [k']'s are generally represented in conventional spelling in the Roman alphabet as ph, th, and kh, respectively. The middle consonant of the word Pathet as in Pathet Lao, for example, is an aspirated [t'], represented by the two letters th. You'll notice many of these ph's, th's, and kh's in the names given on page 3.

The remaining three consonants in Lao are [ʔ], [n͡y] and [t͡y]. [ʔ] is a glottal stop, pronounced closing the vocal cords briefly. English has many glottal stops - for example, in the uh-uh meaning 'no' the break between syllables is a glottal stop. Glottal stops in Lao will be difficult for English speakers to hear, however; here are some examples:

[paʔ^{5}]	'abandon'	[hɔʔ^{1}]	'to wander'
[ʔa:p^{4}]	'to bathe'	[ʔa:n͡g^{1}]	'saucer'

[n͡y] is the sound in Russian nyet or English canyon or news (if you pronounce it nyooz rather than nooz). The ‿ over the two letters is to remind you that the two represent a single sound, rather than an [n] followed by a [y].

The sound [t͡y] is close to English ch as in church, or to the beginning sound in tune or Tuesday if you pronounce them tyoon and Tyoozday, respectively. The ‿ over the letters reminds you that they are a single sound, not a [t] followed by a [y].

Here is a chart of all twenty consonants, arranged according to type of sound and place where articulated in the mouth:

p'	t'		k'	
p	t	t͡y	k	ʔ
b	d			
	f	s		h
m	n	n͡y	ŋ͡g	
		l		
	y		w	

All the consonants of Lao can occur at the beginnings of words. [w] can also occur as a second consonant at the beginnings of words, for example in words like [kwa:ŋ͡g^{1}] 'deer', [swa:y^{5}] 'late', and [lwa:^{1}] 'donkey'.

At the ends of words, only some of the consonants occur, specifically [p], [t], [k], [ʔ], [m], [n], [ŋ͡g], [w] and [y]. This relative scarcity of consonants at the ends of words, and the lack of consonant clusters at both the beginnings and ends, has ramifications with regard to Lao speakers' problems in pronouncing English.

As we mentioned before, Lao has a lot of vowels. There is a series of nine short vowels, a series of their long counterparts, and several diphthongs, for a total of twenty-two.

The short vowels are as follows:

[i], like English ee as in beet, sometimes like English i as in bit.

[e], like English ay as in play.

[ɛ], like English e as in bet.

[ɨ], like the vowel in the second syllable of English roses.

[ə], like English u as in but.

[a], like English a as in father.

[u], like English oo as in boot.

[o], like English o as in both.

[ɔ], like English au as in caught (if you pronounce caught differently from cot; if you don't, [ɔ] is half-way between [o] and [a]).

Each of these short vowels has a long counterpart, a vowel pronounced just the same only lasting longer. As you might have noticed in previous examples, we use a colon to indicate vowel length. Here are some examples of short and long

vowels:

[k'ɔʔ^{1}]	'to knock'	[k'ɔ:^{1}]	'neck'
[ay^{1}]	'to cough'	[a:y^{1}]	'vapor'
[ket^{6}]	'fish scale'	[k'e:t^{1}]	'hair of the Buddha' (poetic)
[mɨn^{1}]	'numb'	[mɨ:n^{1}]	'to open the eyes'

The diphthongs in Lao are combinations of the vowels listed above, specifically:

[ia], like English ia as in Tia Maria

[ɨa], for which there is no counterpart in English.

[ua], like English ua as in truant or fluent.

[aɨ], for which there is no counterpart in Egnlish.

Some examples of the diphthongs:

[kaɨ^{3}]	'to be near'	[buaŋ^{2}]	'spoon'
[kuan^{1}]	'to bother'	[lɨay^{3}]	'often'

As we mentioned before, every syllable in Lao has a tone associated with it. There are six tones in Lao: we have been indicating tones in the examples by means of numbers to the right of each syllable. The tones associated with the numbers are described below. The descriptions, however, won't mean a thing unless you get a Lao friend to pronounce the words for you. For this reason, we have spelled the examples in the Lao alphabet as well as in phonetic transcription, so that your Lao friend will know what words you're talking about.

Tone	Description	Example	
1	normal, level	ລໍ່ຖ້າ	[k'ɔ:ŋ^{1}] 'to wait for'
2	mid level	ລ້ຳ	[k'ɔ:ŋ^{2}] 'harmonious'
3	high level	ລ໊ຳ	[k'ɔ:ŋ^{3}] 'gong'
4	falling	ລ໋ຳ	[k'ɔ:ŋ^{4}] 'fish basket'
5	gliding	ລ໋ຳ	[k'ɔ:ŋ^{5}] 'belongings'
6	low level	ປັກ	[ket^{6}] 'fish scale'

B. Words and Sentences in Lao

1. Words

When we were talking about syllables, we mentioned that words in Lao are generally of one syllable; all the examples in the previous section were one-syllabled as well. Lao also has compound words on the order of our blackboard, tinsmith, ballpoint, and so on. Some examples:

[hɨa^{1}bin^{1}] 'airplane', from [hɨa^{1}] 'boat' and [bin^{1}] 'fly'
[k'on^{1}ŋ͡ga:n^{1}] 'worker', from [k'on^{1}] 'person', and [ŋ͡ga:n^{1}] 'work'
[ha'n^{3}tat^{6}p'om^{5}] 'barber shop', from [ha:n^{3}] 'shop', [tat^{6}] 'cut' and [p'om^{5}] 'hair'
[sɨa^{4}sə:t^{3}] 'shirt', from [sɨa^{4}] 'upper garment' and [sə:t^{3}] 'shirt' ([sə't^{3}] is the English word shirt, restructured to fit Lao sounds and syllable structure.)

As you can see from the examples, many words for items of western culture are compounds consisting of Lao words, rather than words borrowed from the relevant western languages.

While words can freely be put together to form compounds, there are no native prefixes or suffixes in Lao; in other words, there are no elements like English trans- (as in transport, translate, transition, etc.) which can't be used by themselves as separate words, but which are attached to other elements with corresponding changes in meaning.

All this means that there are no suffixes like plurals, possessives, or case markers, either; a Lao word is always the same no matter how it is used in a sentence. Note how the word [to:n^{1}], which means 'jump', stays the same in the following examples:

[p'uak^{1}haw^{1} to:n^{1}] 'We jump.'
'we' 'jump'
[p'uak^{1}haw^{1} t͡ɕa^{1} to:n^{1}] 'We will jump.'
'we' 'will' 'jump'
[p'uak^{1}haw^{1} kam^{1}laŋ͡^{1} to:n^{1}] 'We are jumping.'
'we' 'progressive' 'jump'
[p'uak^{1}haw^{1} to:n^{1} lɛ:w^{3}] 'We have jumped.'
'we' 'jump' perf.

(Notice that we have translated the example sentences word for word - the translations appear directly underneath the Lao words - as well as providing an idiomatic translation to the right. The underlined translations are grammatical terms; they will be explained in due course.)

Personal pronouns (words like I, you, he, they) in Lao are different in several respects from English personal pronouns. First, they do not change form (there's no I - me - my - mine business), as can be seen from the following examples:

[p'uak^{1}haw^{1} hen^{5} p'ə:n^{2}] 'We see him.'
'we' 'see' 'he'
[p'ə:n^{2} hen^{5} p'uak^{1}haw^{1}] 'He sees us.'
'he' 'see' 'we'

Second, there is no gender (i.e. sex) distinction expressed in the Lao pronouns. The pronoun [p'ə:n^{2}], translated in the sentences above as 'he', is also used when referring to a woman; the sentences also mean 'We see her' and 'She sees us'. On the other hand, different pronouns are used depending on the relative social status of the people involved in the conversation: in classic Lao usage, an adult male will use up to seven different words in referring to himself; choice of word will depend on whether he is talking to 1) Buddha or a bonze; 2) monarch; 3) mandarins; 4) high civil servant or military officers; 5) ordinary people on the street; 6) close friends; or 7) those to whom he wants to express hostility! All seven of these terms would translate into English as 'I'.

2. Sentences

As you can tell from the two sentences given above, the basic order of words in a Lao sentence is subject - verb - object, as it is in English, and in other languages spoken by the refugees. (This is not the only order that subject and so on can come in; the order in Japanese, for example, is subject - object - verb, and in Arabic it's verb - subject - object.)

Subjects are often left out in Lao sentences. So, for example, the answer to the following question:

[t͡yaw^{3} k'aw^{4}t͡yaɨ^{1} bɔ:^{1}] 'Do you understand?
'you' 'understand' Q

is simply:

[k'aw^{4}t͡yaɨ^{1}] 'I understand'
'understand'

with the equivalent of 'I' left out. Another example of a left-out subject is given below, but note that in the equivalent English, we can leave out not only the subject but also the verb. Lao speakers leave the verb in.

[t͡yaw^{3} tɔ:n͡g^{3}ka:n^{1} n͡yan͡g^{5}] 'What do you need?'
'you' 'need' 'what'
[tɔ:n͡g^{3}ka:n^{1} may^{3}ki:t^{4}fay^{1}] "Matches.'
'need' 'match'

Like other refugee languages, Lao does not have a verb 'be' in sentences with predicate adjectives (which - are you remembering your grammar? - are words like pretty in the sentence She is pretty), for example:

[k'ɔ:n͡g^{5}kin^{1} sɛp^{1} la:y^{5}] 'The food is very good.'
'food' 'good' 'very'

Lao does have equivalents of 'be', however, in sentences with predicate nouns, for example, the word [pen^{1}] in:

[t'an^{2} p'on͡g^{5} pen^{1} mɔ:^{5}] 'Mr. Phong is a doctor.'
'Mr.' 'Phong' 'be' 'doctor'

As we mentioned before, the order of words in a Lao sentence is subject - verb - object. The order is always the same, whether the sentence is a statement or a question. In this respect, Lao differs from English: note that while the English and Lao word orders are the same in the sentence Mr. Phong is a doctor given above, the orders in the corresponding questions are different:

[t'an^{2} p'on͡g^{5} pen^{1} mɔ:^{5} bɔ:^{2}] 'Is Mr. Phong a doctor?'
'Mr.' 'Phong' 'be' 'doctor' Q

In English, the question is formed in part by moving the verb to the beginning, whereas in Lao the verb stays where it is. The same sort of thing goes on with questions involving words like what, where, and so on. Compare:

[p'ə:n^{2} tɔ:n͡g^{3}ka:n^{1} may^{3}ki:t^{4}fay^{1}] 'He needs matches.'
'he' 'need' 'match'

with

[p'ə:n^{2} tɔ:n͡g^{3}ka:n^{1} n͡yan͡g^{1}] 'What does he need?'
'he' 'need' 'what'

in which the direct object what in the English version is at the beginning of the sentence, and the verb surrounds the subject he. In the Lao version, the word for what remains behind the verb, as all good direct objects should. All this makes it a lot easier for English speakers to learn to ask questions in Lao than for Lao speakers to ask questions in English.

Another way in which Lao differs remarkably from English is in the way noun phrases (like the big red house on the corner or my three sons) are put together. Lao doesn't have articles like English does: there are no words which translate straight across as 'the' or 'a'. Nor, as we mentioned earlier in this section, does it have suffixes to indicate plural or possession. Lao instead expresses these sorts of things with different combinations of words.

Like many of the languaes of eastern Asia, Lao has a system of classifiers. We have something like "classifiers" in English: note that we can talk of a stick of gum, but not a gum, a glass of water but not a water, a grain of sand but not a sand, and so on. The words stick, glass and grain in these examples are parallel to classifiers in Lao. But in Lao every noun has a classifier, whereas in English only certain nouns do. (We can say, for example, a desk; the noun desk doesn't have to have a "classifier" used with it.)

Lao classifiers are used in talking about particular numbers of things, as in the following examples:

[mak^{6}kiang^{2} hok^{6} nuay^{2}] 'six oranges'
'orange' 'six' clf

[kay^{2} ning^{2} to:^{1}] 'one chicken'
'chicken' 'one' clf

[p'u:^{4}nging^{1} ha:^{4} k'on^{1}]
'woman' 'five' clf 'five women'

[nang^{5}si:^{5} la:ng^{1} lem^{4}]
'book' 'some' clf 'some books'

Each noun in Lao has a particular classifier associated with it. The same classifier will generally be used with nouns of roughly the same semantic category (although there are exceptions); here are some of the commoner classifiers, and the kinds of nouns they occur with:

[to:^{1}], used with animals, birds, fish

[nuay^{2}], used with fruits, eggs, and other round things, including the moon

[k'on^{1}], used with people

[k'u:^{2}], used with things in pairs, like shoes

[lem^{4}], used with books and boats

[p'o:ng^{2}], used with anything with an opening in it, like windows and doors

A Lao noun by itself with no classifier sometimes translates into English as a definite noun, requiring 'the'; usually the 'definiteness' is established by the conversation, as it is in English. So

[lo:ng^{1}k'aw^{4}kɛ:ng^{1} yu:^{2} say^{5}] 'Where is the restaurant?'
'restaurant' 'locate' 'where'

can presuppose, in both languages, that the asker and askee have a particular restaurant in mind.

The noun by itself without a classifier is also used in Lao to refer to something in general, without regard to a particular example of that something. Speaking in general about horses, for example, the Lao can say:

[ma:^{3} pen^{1} sat^{6} sa^{1}nit^{1} nɨ̀ng^{2}]

'horse' 'be' 'animal' 'kind' 'one'

which has to translate into English either with the plural: 'Horses are a kind of animal'; the singular noun with the article a: 'A horse is a kind of animal'; or even with a the: 'The horse is a kind of animal.'

As you might have noticed in the examples with numbers given above, modifiers in Lao always follow the noun they modify. In the following sentence, for example, the words [ni:^{3}] 'this', [sɔ̀p^{1}] 'good', and [t'ɛ:^{3}] 'really', each come after the word they modify, not before as in English:

[lo:ng^{1}k'aw^{4}kɛ:ng^{1} ni:^{3} mi:^{1} k'ɔ:ng^{5}kin^{1} sɔ̀p^{1} t'ɛ:^{3}]

'restaurant' 'this' 'have' 'food' 'good' 'really'

'This restaurant has really good food.'

We have just shown some of the ways in which noun phrases in Lao differ from noun phrases in English. Verb phrases in the two languages differ as well.

One of the differences is that Lao verbs have no suffixes to indicate tense, agreement with the subject, or any of the other things English verbs are famous for. The verb [mi:^{1}] 'have', for example, is always [mi:^{1}], whether the sentence is present or past or future, whether the subject is singular or plural, or whatever else.

Things like tenses, negatives and (as we showed earlier) questions are expressed in Lao by words which parallel English modals and auxiliaries (words like must, can, will, etc.). Some of these auxiliaries come before the verb, and some after. Here are some examples, with the Lao auxiliary and its English equivalent circled:

[p'uak^{1}k'aw^{4} (bɔ:^{2}) mi:^{1} ŋən^{1}] 'They don't have any money.'

'they' 'not' 'have' 'silver'

(Note that the word [bɔ:^{2}] above, meaning 'not', is the same, except for the tone, as the question particle [bɔ:^{1}] that we have used in earlier example sentences.)

[p'uak^{1}k'aw^{4} kam^{1}lang^{1} si:^{3} kay^{2}] 'They are buying chicken.'

'they' progressive 'buy' 'chicken'

[k'ɔ:y^{4} tɔ:ng^{3} het^{1} ka:n^{1}] 'I must work."

'I' 'must' 'work'

[p'uak^{1}k'aw^{4} tya^{1} pay^{1} be:ng^{2} hu:p^{1}ngaw^{1}] 'They will go to the movie.'
'they' 'will' 'go' 'see' 'movie'

[p'uak^{1}k'aw^{4} tya^{1} day^{3} pay^{1} be:ng^{2} hu:p^{1}ngaw^{1}] 'They will have gone to the movie.'
'they' 'will' past 'go' 'see' 'movie'

[p'e:n^{2} pay^{1} ba:n^{3} le:w^{3}] 'He has gone home.'
'he' 'go' 'home' perfect

(The perfect in the previous sentence is the grammatical perfect, as in present perfect tense. The word [le:w^{3}], which is often translated as 'already', indicates completed action, and is fairly close to our present perfect - or past perfect, depending on the context - in meaning.)

In the discussion above, we have focussed on aspects of simple sentences in Lao which differ from English. These aspects also happen to be those that are fairly extensively dealt with in good ESL texts. Such matters as the tense system, the use of articles, and word-order changes between sentences and their corresponding negatives and questions are problems for all ESL students, not just the Lao.

IV. The Lao Alphabet

The Lao alphabet, which is very similar to the Thai alphabet, is ultimately derived from the alphabetic systems used to represent Sanskrit and other languages of India. While it's a fairly complicated system, with more symbols than there are sounds, there are almost none of the exceptions to the sound-symbol correspondences that there are, say, with the English alphabet.

Probably the biggest difference between the Lao and English alphabets (besides the different characters) is that in the Lao alphabet, the order of letters in a word does not necessarily correspond to the order in which the represented sounds are pronounced. In particular, the symbols representing the vowels and diphthongs are written either to the right, to the left, above or below the symbol representing the initial consonant. Note, in the following examples, how the symbols representing the various vowels are written relative to the consonant symbol ป [p']:

ปา [p'a:^{1}] 'accompany' (vowel symbol to the right)
เป [p'e:^{1}] 'raft' (vowel symbol to the left)
ปี [p'i:^{1}] 'be fat' (vowel symbol above)
ปู [p'u:^{1}] 'mountain' (vowel symbol below)

Consonant symbols function both as representatives of consonant sounds and also as tone indicators. There are only two tone symbols per se (written over the first or second consonant symbol in the syllable, or over the vowel symbol if that is over the consonant symbol): ◌่ and ◌้. The choice of consonant symbol, and the occurrence or non-occurrence of the tone symbols, combine in several different ways to indicate which tone the syllable is pronounced with.

The easiest of the combinations to illustrate is the 'high' and 'low' consonant system. For some consonant sounds, there are two symbols: the 'high' symbol and the 'low' symbol; choice of one or the other indicates what tone the syllable is pronounced with. The words [k'ɔ:^{5}] 'ask' and [k'ɔ:^{1}] 'neck', for example, differ only in tone. Their spellings, however, differ in the choice of symbol for the sound [k']:

ส่อ [k'ɔ:^{5}] 'ask' (ส is the 'high' symbol)
ข่อ [k'ɔ:^{1}] 'neck' (ข is the 'low' symbol)

Other consonants are represented by just one symbol, a 'low' symbol, which is converted into a 'high' symbol by adding the symbol ห in front of the 'low' symbol. The consonant [n͡y], for example, is represented by the symbol ญ. But note the different spellings of the words [n͡ya:^{1}]'term of respect' and [n͡ya:^{4}], 'grass':

ญา [n͡ya:^{1}] 'term of respect' (with the symbol by itself)
หญ้า [n͡ya:^{4}] 'grass' (with the additional symbol, plus the tone marker ◌้)

There are many other combinations - some of them involving the choice of symbol for final consonants - whereby tones are indicated. They are too involved to go into here, but if you are interested, Book II of Spoken Lao has an excellent, clear description of the entire writing system.

To summarize: in the spelling of a syllable, the consonant symbols will be written in the order in which they are pronounced; choice of consonant symbols will often depend on the tone with which the syllable is pronounced. The vowel symbols will be written to the right, to the left, above or below the first consonant (for second, if there is one) in the syllable. The tone markers are written above the first or second consonant, or above the vowel above the first or second consonant.

Syllables and words are written from left to right on the page, but no spaces are left between them. The sentence we listed on page 12 in the phonetic transcription as [k'a^{4} bɔ:^{2} mi:^{1} ŋ͡an^{1}] 'They don't have any money', is written in

the Lao alphabet as follows, with no spaces between the individual words:

ຄຳເວົ້າ

There is no capital letter - small letter distinction made in the alphabet, and not much use is made of punctuation marks. (The punctuation that is used follows French or English usage.)

Here is an example of a running text in the Lao alphabet. It's a passage on the Lao new year, written by Fan Ditsavangso.

ອ ຳ ລ ັ ອ ຍ ປ ຸ ນ ສ ິ ວ ກ ຳ ນ

ຄຳວ່າ " ກຸ ດ ິ ຕ ຣຸ ດ " ແປວ່ າ " ຕ ໜ ິ ດ ຫ ລ ິ ້ ຮ ຸ ງ " " ສ ິ ວ ກ ຳ ນ " ແປ ວ່ ຳ " ກ ຳ ຈ ຸ ລ ວ ງ ໄ ປ ຫ ລ ິ ້ ຍ ປ ີ " ປ ຸ ນ ກ ຸ ດ ສ ິ ວ ກ ຳ ນ ດ ິ " ປ ຸ ນ ຫ ີ ເ ຣ ິ ດ ໃ ນ ມ ື ້ ຮ ຸ ງ ຂ ຳ ນ ລ ວ ງ " ໄ ດ ແ ກ ປ ຸ ນ ປ ີ ເ ຣ ິ ດ ໃ ນ ມ ື ້ ວ ັ ນ ປ ີ ໃ ໝ ຫ ລ ຳ ຈ ເ ຈ ົ ້ ຳ ນ ິ ຍ ຳ ຂ ຳ ນ ປ ູ ຊ ຳ ນ ໃ ນ ຣ ະ ຫ ວ ຳ ງ ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ມ ນ ຍ ຳ ຍ ເ ຈ ຳ ສ ຸ ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ເ ມ ຄ ິ ໃ ນ ຣ ະ ຫ ວ ຳ ງ ວ ັ ນ ທ ີ ່ ໑ ມ ີ - ໑ ໔ ແ ລ ະ ໑ ໕ ເ ມ ສ ຳ ຍ ອ ງ ສ ຸ ກ ວ ປ ີ (ປ ີ ນ ວ ມ ໑ ໘ ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ຫ ັ ນ ກ ັ ບ ຈ ຳ ນ ວ ນ ຂ ອ ງ ເ ດ ື ອ ນ ມ ຈ ຸ ດ ິ ວ ນ ຄ ິ : ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ມ ັ ງ ກ ອ ນ (ມ ິ ກ ຣ ຳ) ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ກ ຸ ມ (ກ ຸ ມ ພ ຳ) ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ມ ີ ນ (ມ ີ ນ ຳ) ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ເ ມ ສ (ເ ມ ສ ຳ) ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ພ ຶ ດ ສ ພ (ພ ຶ ດ ສ ພ ຳ) ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ເ ມ ຖ ຸ ນ (ມ ິ ຖ ຸ ນ ຳ) ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ກ ໍ ຣ ະ ກ ົ ດ (ກ ໍ ຣ ະ ກ ະ ດ ຳ) ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ສ ິ ງ (ສ ິ ງ ຫ ຳ) ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ກ ັ ນ ຍ (ກ ັ ນ ຍ ຳ) ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ຕ ຸ ລ (ຕ ຸ ລ ຳ) ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ພ ິ ດ ຈ ິ ກ (ພ ິ ດ ຈ ິ ກ ຳ) ແ ລ ະ ຣ ຳ ສ ີ ທ ັ ນ (ທ ັ ນ ວ ຳ) .

ໃ ນ ມ ຸ ກ ສ ິ ວ ກ ຳ ນ ມ ີ ມ ຸ ນ ມ ห ำ ອ ົ ດ ຣ ຸ ກ ວ ຳ ມ ี ส ิ ว ก ำ น (ล ว ง) ไ ป ห ย ุ ด ส อ ง ร ุ ก ว ำ ม ส ิ ว ก ำ น ห ั ก ล บ ห ำ แ ล ะ ม ห ำ ส ำ ม ร ุ ก ว ำ ม ส ิ ว ก ำ น ม ำ (ช ้ ำ) ด ป ั น ป ฐ ม จ ุ ล ะ ส ิ ว ก ำ ล .

ป ุ น ก ุ ด ส ิ ว ก ำ น ม ี ย ิ น ด ี เ ร ิ ด ใ น ส ำ ม ฆ ำ ว ะ ป ะ ช ุ ม ค ำ ม ี ย ิ น ด ี เ ล ้ ำ ร ี ย ง ส ิ ว ไ ว ้ ใ ห ้ ค ล ิ บ ส ิ ว ย ำ ว ุ ฒ ิ ข ึ ้ น ป ี ใ ห ม ่ ๑ ๔ ค ่ ำ เ ด ื อ น ๔ จ ุ ล ศ ั ก ร า ช ออกใหม่ ๑๔ ค่ำ เดือน ๕ จุลศักราช ออกใหม่ ๑๔ ค่ำ เดือน ๖ เป็นเวลาเดือนมืด พิธี สวนมิตเรียกขึ้นใน ๓ มนษย์ :

๑. ส ิ ว ย ำ ม ะ ฆ ุ ต ร ุ ย (อ ่ อ ม า ล า ไ ท ย แ ล ะ ย ิ น ด ี ย ิ น ด ี ย อ ม)
๒. ส ิ ว ย ำ ม ะ พ ั ก ธ ุ ส ิ ว (เ ผ ื ่ อ อ ่ อ ม า ล า ไ ท ย แ ล ะ อ ่ ิ น ด ี อ ่ อ ม จ า ก ผ ู ้ ห ิ ว ข ึ ้ น)
๓. ส ิ ว ย ำ ผ ู ้ ช ้ ำ ผ ู ้ ฉ ล ะ ผ ู ้ ค ว ร เ ค ำ ร ั ย ย ิ น ด ี (เ ผ ื ่ อ อ ่ อ ม า ล า ไ ท ย แ ล ะ อ ่ ิ น อ ่ อ ม)
๔. ต ิ ย ผ ะ จ ำ ย (อ ำ ไ ท ป ู ่ ถ ื ม ุ ธ ร ุ ง ม ี ค ว ำ ม ส ุ ก ส ว ั ด ด ี ใ น ป ี ใ ห ม ่)
๕. ท ำ ข ุ น ธ ร ร ม ไ ห ้ ว ั ด ว ำ อ ำ ร ำ ม แ ล ะ ป ล ่ อ ย ส ั ต ว ์ (อ ะ ธ ิ ฐ ำ น อ ำ ไ ท ้ อ ำ ย ุ ย ื น ป ั ส จ ำ ก ค ว ำ ม ท ั น ต ำ ย ท ี ่ เ ค ย ร ั ก ก ั น ม ำ ล ว ง) .

ไทย ผะสักดำ สุวันนะบุดสีดะบาจาน
(ฟัน ติดสะอ้ายไส)
อะดีดเลอาอ้ายสมเด็ด ผะสังคะยากลาจ.

V. English Pronunciation Lessons for Lao Speakers

A. Teaching the lessons

The twenty-seven lessons that follow deal with the particular problems that Lao speakers are likely to have in learning to pronounce English. Your particular student's problems with English will be lessened if he has had some French, and therefore some exposure to final consonants and consonant clusters or blends. Conversely, if your student is illiterate in Lao, or has had no exposure to French or a Roman alphabet, you will want to pay careful attention to his pronunciation problems, making sure that he hears the differences between problem sounds before asking him to deal with the letters representing them.

The pronunciation lessons provide the teacher with words and sentences which can be used to teach Lao students to distinguish between sounds they are likely to have trouble with, and also to produce the problem sounds so they can be understood by Americans. The lessons for the most part consist of minimal pairs, minimal sentences, practice sentences, and notes.

Minimal pairs are pairs of words which differ in only one sound, like bit-beat, sin-sing, and so on. We are talking about sounds, not spellings; road and rogue are a minimal pair, despite the fact that their spellings differ in more than one way. Their phonetic representations [rowd] and [rowg] indicate more clearly that they are minimal pairs. (A reminder here, that we are enclosing pronunciation representations in square brackets for English the same way we did earlier in talking about Lao. The word road is pronounced [rowd].)

The minimal sentences are like minimal pairs, except that the sounds in question are put into whole sentences, for example That's my seat and That's my sheet, which differ only in the [s] in seat as opposed to the [s͡h] in sheet.

The practice sentences given in the lessons have been engineered to provide students with practice in the sounds the lessons deal with. We have tried to keep the sentences simple, so that beginning students will understand them; you might, however, want to construct practice sentences of your own, using vocabulary and sentence patterns your students have already learned. In any event, these sentences will be to Lao speakers what tongue-twisters are to English speakers; they should be approached in the same light-hearted fashion.

The notes in the lessons are for the teacher; they explain why the sounds in the lessons are problems for Lao speakers, and give suggestions for teaching the particular sounds dealt with from lesson to lesson.

The lessons deal, one at a time, with aspects of English pronunciation that Lao speakers in particular have. You should use the material in the lessons first to teach your students to hear the difference between the sounds they are likely to confuse; then to teach them to pronounce the problem sounds so they can be understood; and finally to help them establish acceptable pronunciation of the sounds as a habit.

The ninth lesson, for example, deals with the sounds [s] as in seat and [s͡h] as in sheet. As the notes to the teacher explain, Lao has an [s] sound, but no [s͡h] sound; the Lao speaker will tend to confuse them.

Perception

1. The first step in teaching the lesson is to establish that the difference between [s] and [s͡h] makes words different. This can be done in several ways. One is to find pictures of, say, a sheet and a seat. Hold up the picture of the sheet and say sheet, then hold up the picture of the seat and say seat. Another - if you have a Lao bilingual aide, or if one of your students has a wide vocabulary - is to have the words sheet and seat translated: write them on the board, and have your aide or student write the Lao equivalents next to them.

2. Once you have shown that the meanings of words change along with the alternation between [s] and [s͡h], you should teach the students to hear the difference between [s] and [s͡h]. (Note that at this point you have not asked your students to pronounce them yet.) Put the picture of the seat on one side of the classroom, and the picture of the sheet on the other side; say seat and sheet at random, having the students point to the appropriate picture as you do so. Continue with the other pairs, using pictures if you have them, or writing the English words on the board.

Another technique for teaching students to hear the difference between sounds is to write the minimal pairs in columns (as they are listed in the lessons), and to label the columns '1' or '2', say '1' for the words with [s], and '2' for the words with [s͡h]. Say an [s] or an [s͡h] word, and have your students tell you whether it's a '1' or '2'.

Another technique is to say pairs of words, and have the students tell whether the words are "same" or "different". Say, for example, sheet - sheet; the students should respond "same". Say sheet - seat; the students should respond "different".

Carry on with activities like these until your students can respond instantly and correctly. You'll be surprised how quickly they will learn to hear differences like these.

When your students can handle the minimal pairs, continue with similar activities using the minimal sentences. (Be sure, when working with sentences, that your own pronunciation is at your normal speaking speed. If you slow down, or pronounce words more carefully than you usually do, you are not equipping your students to deal with normally-spoken English.)

Production

1. When your students hear the differences between [s] and [s͡h] with no difficulty, you can go on to teach them how to pronounce the [s͡h]. Most ESL teachers simply ask the students to repeat the words in the minimal pairs one at a time, first with the students repeating in chorus, then individually. What the student does with the difficult sounds, essentially, is to try random pronunciations until he hits on one that sounds good to his teacher. When your students can manage the pronunciation of the problem sounds, you can reverse the activities described above; have the students pronounce the words for you to judge as '1' or '2' word , etc.

2. When your students can pronounce the minimal pairs comfortably, you can go on to drill the minimal sentences. We have listed some of the sentences in phrases, to remind you to start with smaller elements and build up the whole sentence. Start with phrases from the end of the sentence, and work forward; this will keep your own pronunciation natural. For example:

You: seat
Students: seat
You: my seat
Students: my seat
You: That's my seat.
Students: That's my seat., etc.

3. The next step is the practice sentences, which, as we mentioned before, should be approached light-heartedly, like tongue-twisters. (Skip any sentences that require too much explanation of meaning and vocabulary, and make up sentences of your own to supplement the ones we've given.) Drill the sentences the same way as the minimal sentences.

4. As a final step, you should go over any vocabulary you have taught that has [s]'s or [s͡h]'s in it; write the words on the board, point out the occurrences of the sounds, and have your students pronounce them several times. (Watch out for curves thrown by the English spelling system; the word application, for example, has an [s͡h] in it!)

Reminding

After you have taught the lesson on [s] and [s͡h], and are sure your students can both hear and produce the two sounds appropriately, you can correct your students' errors on [s] and [s͡h] as they come up in class. Even when your students can pronounce [s] and [s͡h], they will forget to if they are concentrating on other aspects of English. But if they have been through the pronunciation lesson, a quick reminder ("Watch your [s]", for example) will jog their memories, and help them establish acceptable pronunciation as a habit.

General Hints

The most important thing about teaching pronunciation is to keep your own pronunciation natural, and to speak at the same speed you ordinarily do. Slowing down your speech does not make it easier for your students to understand you; on the contrary, it does them a disservice, as they have to deal with normally-paced English outside the classroom. If your students comment that "We understand everything in class, but have trouble understanding other people," you should listen to yourself carefully; chances are you're slowing down for them.

In some of the lessons, we have indicated that you should probably not insist on perfection in your students' production of a particular sound or combination. Your overall goal is to make their pronunciation easily understandable by native English speakers, and to see to it that they understand normally-spoken English. Some sounds - notably the th sounds - are not worth the time it takes

to teach perfect pronunciation; if your students can hear th correctly, and consistently produce something that is an understandable substitute for the th, there is no need to spend the necessary time getting them to produce a perfect th.

This has been a very cursory discussion of procedures in teaching pronunciation. There are more extensive explanations and suggestions in the pronunciation texts listed in the last section of this Guide.

B. English Pronunciation Lessons for Lao Speakers

1. [p], [t] and [k] at ends of words
2. [m], [p] and [b] at ends of words
3. [n], [d] and [t] at ends of words
4. [n͡g], [g] and [k] at ends of words
5. [r] and [l]
6. [Ø], [r], [l] and [n] at ends of words
7. [ɪ] and [iy]
8. [s] and [z]
9. [s] and [s͡h]
10. [s͡h] and [c͡h]
11. [s], [z], [t], [c͡h], and [s͡h] at the ends of words
12. [ɛ] and [æ]
13. [w] and [v]
14. [p], [f], [b], and [v] at ends of words
15. [y], [j] and [z͡h]
16. [ð], [d] and [z]
17. [θ], [t] and [s]
18. Final consonant clusters with [s]
19. Final consonant clusters with [z]
20. Final consonant clusters with [t]
21. Final consonant clusters with [d]
22. Final consonant clusters with [l]
23. Final consonant clusters with [r]
24. Other final consonant clusters
25. Initial consonant clusters with [s]
26. Initial consonant clusters with [r] and [l]
27. Initial three-consonant clusters

Lesson One

[p], [t], and [k] at the ends of words

[p]	[t]	[k]
sap	sat	sack
sip	sit	sick
cape	Kate	cake
whip	wit	wick
cope	coat	Coke
sop	sot	sock
sheep	sheet	sheik
weep	wheat	week
map	mat	Mac

Coke	coat
a Coke	a coat
I need a Coke.	I need a coat.

sheep	sheet	sheik
the sheep	the sheet	the sheik
Look at the sheep!	Look at the sheet!	Look at the sheik!

It's a big map./ It's a big mat./ It's a Big Mac.
He bought a cape./ He bought a cake.

When do they reap the wheat?
Kate is weak from being sick.
She bought a cape and a coat.
That cake is too sweet.
Jake wrote a note to Pat.
Coke is her favorite drink.

Notes

1. This is a production lesson. Your Lao students will have no difficulty hearing [p], [t] and [k] at the ends of words, as these consonants occur at the ends of words in Lao.

Lesson One cont.

2. In Lao, however, these consonants are pronounced differently from the way they are pronounced in English (technically, they are unreleased). If your Lao student pronounces [p], [t] and [k] in English as he does in Lao, Americans won't recognize them.
3. Teach your students to "emphasize" the [p]'s, [t]'s and [k]'s, pronouncing them so that you clearly recognize them.

Lesson Two

[m], [p], and [b] at the ends of words

[m]	[p]	[b]
mom	mop	mob
clam	cop	cob
slam	slap	slab
come	cup	cub
roam	rope	robe
rim	rip	rib
lamb	lap	lab

lab
your lab
Put this in your lab.

lap
your lap
Put this in your lap.

mom
his mom
Where's his mom?

mop
his mop
Where's his mop?

Don't sit on my lamb./ Don't sit on my lap.
He's slamming the door./ He's slapping the door.

The cop tried to calm the mob.
My mom had to mop up the mess.
The thief came to rob the shop.
I hope they come home in time.
Don't harm the cub.
Fill the cup to the rim.

Notes

1. [m] and [p] at the ends of words will be easy for your Lao students to hear, as they exist in Lao as well. [b] will be the problem.
2. Your students might put a vowel after the final [b], and come up with something like "lab(uh)" for lab. Americans will find this pronunciation of final [b] understandable. This extra vowel is called an epenthetic vowel.

Lesson Three

[n], [d] and [t] at the ends of words

[n]	[d]	[t]
bean	bead	beet
pan	pad	pat
been	bid	bit
an	add	at
moan	mode	moat
spine	spied	spite
can	cad	cat

rotten
is rotten
The bean is rotten.

rotten
is rotten
The beet is rotten.

in
them in
He led them in.

in
them in
He let them in.

Where did you put the can?/ Where did you put the cat?

I found a red bead./ I found a red beet.

Don't pan the book./ Dan't pad the book./ Don't pat the book.

Matt had a white and brown cat.
Pat put the beet in the pan.
He should at least eat the corn.
Can you get the phone?
Don't fret about the test.
Did the parrot bite Brad?
Ben hurt his left hand.

Notes

1. [n] and [t] exist at the ends of words in Lao, so your student won't have trouble with them. [d] will be the problem sound in the lesson.
2. See note 2, Lesson Two, about epenthetic vowels. Your student might put one after his final [d]'s.

Lesson Four

[n͡g], [g] and [k] at the ends of words

[n͡g]	[g]	[k]
bang	bag	back
wing	wig	wick
lung	lug	luck
ping	pig	pick
hang	hag	hack
dung	dug	duck
bring	brig	brick
rang	rag	rack

bag	back
in the bag	in the back
Put it in the bag.	Put it in the back.

rung	rug
that rung	that rug
Stand on that rung.	Stand on that rug.

The rag is dirty./ The rack is dirty.
That's a pretty wing./ That's a pretty wig.
He went off with a bang./ He went off with a bag.

The duck broke his back.
That log is long.
The king rang the big gong.
Bring back the bag.
The dog dug up the back yard.
Lightning bugs appear in spring.
Let Doug sing the song.
The dike sprung a leak.

Lesson Four cont.

Notes

1. [n͡g] and [k] occur at the ends of words in Lao, and so will not be problematic. [g] will cause trouble.
2. See Lesson Two, Note 2 about epenthetic vowels. Your students might put such vowels after final [g]'s.

Lesson Five

[r] and [l]

[r]	[l]	[r]	[l]
wrong	long	erect	elect
read	lead	correct	collect
rug	lug	ray	lay
rather	lather	road	load
right	light	rot	lot
rice	lice	red	led

wrong
That's wrong.

long
That's long.

reading them
He's reading them.

leading them
He's leading them.

rug
a big rug
It's a big rug.

lug
a big lug
It's a big lug.

It's all right./ It's all light.
He doesn't like rice / He doesn't like lice.
Correct the papers./ Collect the papers.

I like fried rice.
Look before you leap.
Our roof leaks.
Bowling is boring.
Jerry lies a lot.
Randy is late for dinner.

Let's light the fire.
Larry lies to read novels.
Let Carol rake the leaves.
The lamb hurt his right leg.
Her dress is yellow and green.
The mirror is on the right.

Lesson Five cont.

Notes

1. This lesson works on [r] and [l] at the beginnings of words or syllables only. The next lesson drills [r], [l] and [n] at the ends of words, and Lessons Twenty-two, Twenty-three and Twenty-six drill [r] and [l] in consonant clusters.
2. Your Lao student will probably confuse [l] with [r] some of the time, and [r] with [l] other times. There's an [l] in Lao, but it doesn't correspond exactly in pronunciation with English [l].
3. This is an important lesson, as the [l] - [r] confusion is part of the negative stereotype of Asians.
4. Lao students from the south - from Pak Se to the Cambodian border - will have a tendency to confuse [l] and [d].

Lesson Six

[Ø], [r], [l] and [n] at the ends of words

[Ø]	[r]	[l]	[n]
foe	four	foal	phone
mow	more	mole	moan
toe	tore	toll	tone
two	tour	tool	tune
tea	tear	teal	teen
bay	Bayer	bail	bane

foal — phone — foe

the foal — the phone — the foe

Grab the foal! — Grab the phone! — Grab the foe!

The toll is too much./ The tone is too much.

She took a tour./ She took a tool.

We can hear the mole./ We can hear the moan.

It's a copper coil./ It's a copper coin.

You can dine cheaply./ You can dial cheaply.

He stubbed his toe on the chair.

He stole the money from the store.

The whole core is full of coal.

Fill the bowl with water.

The deer jumped over the wall.

Will Bill still want to go?

The mole tore for his hole.

Did the mailman bring the phone bill?

You look pale. Are you in pain?

Don will bring a doll for Gail.

Notes

1. Your Lao students will hear final [l] as [n] or [Ø] (the symbol for nothing). They will hear final [r] as [l], [n] or [Ø].

Lesson Six cont.

2. You might want to deal with the sounds two by two, rather than all four at the same time. Contrast [r] and [ø], for example, then [l] and [n], then [r] and [n], and so on.
3. Make sure your students hear the difference between [ø] and [r] at the ends of words. But keep in mind that there are many dialects of English that pronounce [r] as a vowel at the ends of words. (You might speak one of those dialects yourself!) So accept any pronunciation of the final [r] that is easily understandable and consistent.

Lesson Seven

[ɪ] and [iy]

[ɪ]	[iy]	[ɪ]	[iy]
ship	sheep	is	ease
it	eat	lid	lead
sin	seen	slip	sleep
live	leave	fill	feel
rich	reach	pitch	peach

sheep	ship
a big sheep	a big ship
It's a big sheep.	It's a big ship.

lead	lid
the lead	the lid
We took the lead.	We took the lid.

He's sleeping./ He's slipping.
Can you feel it?/ Can you fill it?
He's leaving./ He's living.

Is this drill difficult? No, it's easy.
How many figs did you eat?
He's eating peaches.
I need a dish for the meat.
Can you reach it?

Notes

1. Lao speakers will confuse these two vowels, as Lao has one sound, which is sometimes pronounced like English [ɪ] and sometimes like English [iy].
2. Other refugee groups successfully substitute the diphthong [iə] as in Tia Maria for English [ɪ] (some dialects of English have a similar diphthong for [ɪ]). Lao has the diphthong [iə]; you might try getting your students to pronounce English [ɪ] as [iə].

Lesson Eight

[s] and [z]

[s]	[z]	[s]	[z]
seal	zeal	fussy	fuzzy
sip	zip	recent	reason
racing	raising	dosing	dozing
lacy	lazy	ricer	riser
see	'z'		

racing
racing the dogs
He's racing the dogs.

raising
raising the dogs
He's raising the dogs.

fussy
is fussy
The pattern is fussy.

fuzzy
is fuzzy
The pattern is fuzzy.

Put the ricer down./ Put the riser down.

The snake is hissing at the zebra.
The seal swam easily in the sea.
Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear; Fuzzy Wuzzy had no hair.
Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't fuzzy, was he?
This quiz is easy.
The lazy students are dozing in class.

Notes

1. Lao has an [s], but not a [z]. This lesson drills the two sounds at the beginnings of words and syllables. Following lessons deal with [z] in other places in words.

Lesson Nine

[s] and [ʃ]

[s]	[ʃ]	[s]	[ʃ]
save	shave	fasten	fashion
sigh	shy	pussy	pushy
see	she	messy	meshy
sip	chip	sell	shell
so	show	sun	shun
leases	leashes	sock	shock

seat
my seat
That's my seat.

sheet
my sheet
That's my sheet.

leases
the leases
We lost the leases.

leashes
the leashes
We lost the leashes.

She sells oysters./ She shells oysters.
Give him a sock./ Give him a shock.
She is saving her legs./ She is shaving her legs.

I wish we could fish in the ocean.
It's a shame that she's sick.
She sells seashells.
Show Sam your silver dress.
This sock should be sewed up.
Marsha sells peanuts.
She should save her money.
She studies English.
This dish is from Paris.

Notes

1. There's an [s] in Lao, but no [ʃ] *per se*; depending on the phonetic context, the Lao [s] is sometimes pronounced like English [ʃ]. Your Lao speakers will sometimes pronounce [s] for [ʃ], and sometimes [ʃ] for [s]. This lesson is only on the sounds at beginnings of words. Lesson Eleven deals with them at the ends of words.

Lesson Ten

[s͡h] and [c͡h]

[c͡h]	[s͡h]	[c͡h]	[s͡h]
choose	shoes	matching	mashing
chair	share	crutches	crushes
cheat	sheet	ditching	dishing
cheese	she's	catching	cashing
chew	shoe	watching	washing

washing
washing the baby
She's washing the baby.

watching
watching the baby
She's watching the baby.

share
my share
Take my share.

chair
my chair
Take my chair.

It's a cheat./ It's a sheet.
Are you catching the check?/ Are you cashing the check?
He's mashing the potatoes./ He's matching the potatoes.

Children shouldn't shout.
Which shoes did you choose?
The teaching is chewing out the cheater.
Charlie shared his cheese with me.
I had peaches and cheese for dinner.

Notes

1. Neither of these sounds occurs in Lao. But Lao speakers will substitute their [t͡y'] for English [c͡h], and be easily understood. The problem sound here, then, is the [s͡h].
2. This lesson deals with [s͡h] and [c͡h] at the beginnings of words and syllables. Following lessons drill the two sounds in other positions.

Lesson Eleven

[s], [z], [t], [ch͡] and [sh͡] at the ends of words

[s]	[z]	[t]	[ch͡]	[sh͡]
----	whiz	wit	which	wish
race	raise	rate	----	----
bass	----	bat	batch	bash
peace	peas	Pete	peach	----
Cass	Kaz	cat	catch	cash
----	----	watt	watch	wash
----	ease	eat	each	----
sass	----	sat	----	sash
----	is	it	itch	----
muss	----	mutt	much	mush
----	fizz	fit	----	fish
lass	----	----	latch	lash
mass	----	mat	match	mash
----	goes	goat	----	gauche

peace
for peace
They're searching for peace.

peas
for peas
They're searching for peas.

Pete
for Pete
They're searching for Pete.

potatoes
the potatoes
Mash the potatoes.

potatoes
the potatoes
Match the potatoes.

Lesson Eleven cont.

What's the price?/ What's the prize?
They didn't face him./ They didn't faze him.
That's a funny bass./ That's a funny bat./ That's a funny batch.
Don't muss it up./ Don't mush it up.
That's a nice lass./ That's a nice latch.
Eat your peas./ Eat your peach.
Put the mat down./ Put the match down./ Put the mass down.
Catch the check./ Cash the check.

Bruce found a pit in his peach.
Please sit on this bench.
Let's race down to the beach.
Bees buzz a lot.
The fleas and lice made the cat scratch.
Liz wants to pierce her ears.
Put chocolate sauce on your ice cream.
He ate the mush with ease.
That is a gauche goat.

Notes

1. This is obviously a lesson that should be broken down. We have listed five sounds together because Lao speakers confuse all of them with all of them. [t] and a sound close enough to [c͡h] to be understandable occur at the ends of words in Lao. The other sounds will be confused with these two most of the time -- but with each other often enough to warrant drilling. Try contrasting each of the sounds first with [t], then with [c͡h], then in various combinations with each other.

Lesson Twelve

[ɛ] and [æ]

[ɛ]	[æ]	[ɛ]	[æ]
slept	slapped	bed	bad
beg	bag	fed	fad
gem	jam	men	man
send	sand	pen	pan
then	than	letter	latter
lend	land	met	mat
head	had	left	laughed
guess	gas	ten	tan

men
at the men
Beth laughed at the men.

man
at the man
Beth laughed at the man.

That pen leaks badly./ That pan leaks badly.
Send it carefully./ Sand it carefully.
She won't talk about the pest./ She won't talk about the past.
She left./ She laughed.
It's a good guess./ It's a good gas.

Spread jam on the bread.
Ben can't stand bad weather.
That's the best man.
Jack slept in the bad bed.
I'd rather send the letter on Saturday.
Pat lent me her black dress.
We met in French class.

Notes

1. There's a vowel close to [ɛ] in Lao. The problem sound is [æ].

Lesson Thirteen

[w] and [v]

[v]	[w]	[v]	[w]
veil	wail	vest	west
vent	went	vow	wow
vet	wet	vault	Walt
verse	worse	mooing	moving
vine	wine	rowing	roving
very	wary		

wine
a good wine
That's a good wine.

vine
a good vine
That's a good vine.

They're rowing./ They're roving.
Is that verse?/ Is that worse?
He gave a veil./ He gave a wail.

Every evening lovers wander in the park.
We went to West Virginia.
Violets grow in the grove.
Vicky's vest is very wet.
That's the worst verse I've ever heard.
Put the fine vine wine in the vault.

Notes

1. There's no [v] in Lao per se; the Lao [w] is sometimes pronounced close to English [v], depending on the phonetic context. So your Lao students will confuse English [w] with English [v] and vice versa.
2. This lesson deals with [v] and [w] at the beginnings of words and syllables. The following lesson drills [v] at the ends of words.

Lesson Fourteen

[p], [f], [b] and [v] at the ends of words

[p]	[f]	[b]	[v]
lap	laugh	lab	----
cap	calf	cab	calve
leap	leaf	----	leave
cop	cough	cob	----
rope	----	robe	rove
swap	----	swab	suave
pup	puff	pub	----
cup	cuff	cub	----

cap calf cab

find the cap find the calf find the cab

Did you find the cap? Did you find the calf? Did you find the cab?

They bought a pub./ They bought a puff./ They bought a pup.

Put it in your lab./ Put it in your lap.

Tie up the calf with this rope.

Don't laugh at the cop.

Leave your cap at the pub.

Bob gave Dave a cup of coffee.

I'll swap my pup for your cub.

Leave the leaf on the roof.

Wipe off the stove.

Beef isn't cheap.

Notes

1. Only [p], of the sounds drilled in this lesson, occurs at the ends of words in Lao. You will probably want to contrast each of the other sounds with [p], then with each other.

Lesson Fifteen

[y], [j] and [t͡ʃ]

[y]	[j]	[j]	[t͡ʃ]
Yale	jail	major	measure
yellow	Jello	pledger	pleasure
yell	jell	ages	Asia
yes	Jess	page	beige
yolk	joke	Jock	Jacques
yip	gyp		

yolk
a bad yolk
That was a bad yolk.

joke
a bad joke
That was a bad joke.

He went to Yale./ He went to jail.
It was yellow./ It was Jello.
It hasn't rained in ages./ It nasn't rained in Asia.
Give it to Jock./ Give it to Jacques.

She used up the huge bowl of yellow Jello.
The wedge of onion gave off a pungent odor.
Bad yolks are no joke.
Jack gypped you yesterday.
The seizure affected his vision.

Notes

1. Lao speakers will sometimes substitute the Lao [t͡ʃy] - the unaspirated one - for English [j] with great success.
2. Don't worry over much about English [t͡ʃ]; as you can tell from the esoteric nature of the words in the [t͡ʃ] column, it doesn't occur very often in ordinary garden-variety vocabulary. (Watch out for words ending in -sion, however, like version, lesion, etc.)

Lesson Sixteen

[ð], [d] and [z]

[ð]	[d]	[z]
then	den	Zen
breathe	breed	breeze
soothe	sued	Sue's
bathe	bayed	bays
they	day	----
their	dare	Zayre

breed
breed quickly
Rabbits breed quickly.

breathe
breathe quickly
Rabbits breathe quickly.

D's are bad marks./ These are bad marks.
The baby is teething./ The baby is teasing.

Bill's a little under the weather.
David and Louise loathe used clothes.
They like those things.
They don't dare go there.
The cool breeze was soothing.
The lion dozed in his den.

Notes

1. You should teach this lesson for aural discrimination only; English [ð] does not occur in very many words, and your students will easily be understood if they consistently substitute either [d] or [z] for it. It takes too much time and energy to teach the correct pronunciation of [ð], time much better spent on such things as consonants at the ends of words.
2. Remember that this [ð] sound is one of two that we spell th. [θ], the other th sound, is presented in the next lesson.

Lesson Seventeen

[θ], [t] and [s]

[θ]	[t]	[s]
thank	tank	sank
thinker	tinker	sinker
thought	taught	sought
Thor	tore	sore
thigh	tie	sigh
thick	tick	sick

taught	thought
taught all day	thought all day
He taught all day.	He thought all day.

It's a good team./ It's a good theme.
The pass was open./ The path was open.
It's unsinkable./ It's unthinkable.

I thought Tom's birthday was last week.
Ruth is too thin.
Sid is singing in the bathtub.
Sam thanked his father for the bat and mitt.

Notes

1. Like the preceding lesson, this one should be taught for aural discrimination only. It takes too much time and effort to teach the correct pronunciation of English [θ]; the Lao speaker's substitution of [t] or [s] will be easily understood; and the [θ] sound doesn't occur in that many words in English anyway.
2. Keep in mind that the Lao aspirated [t'] is usually transliterated into the Roman alphabet as th. Your Lao students will probably have figured out that our th spellings represent a sound they don't know.

Lesson Eighteen

Final Consonant Clusters with [s]

[ps]	[ts]	[ks]
cup/cups	cat/cats	walk/walks
type/types	fit/fits	tick/ticks
top/tops	boot/boots	sack/sacks
wipe/wipes	wait/waits	book/books

[fs]	[θs]
cuff/cuffs	path/paths
cough/coughs	myth/myths
laugh/laughs	death/deaths
roof/roofs	

He washed the cup./ He washed the cups.
She hit the baby./ She hits the baby.
It's Walt./ It's Walt's., etc.

Notes

1. In this lesson and the next, we present the consonant clusters that come up with the English plurals (cup-cups), possessives (cat-cat's), present tense forms (wait - waits), and contractions (that-that's). These consonant clusters present a double problem for Lao speakers: first, there are no consonant clusters in Lao, and so their pronunciation is difficult; and second, Lao does not have suffixes like plurals, possessives and tense forms, so suffixes will be difficult for them to remember and put on the relevant words.
2. You will probably want to deal with the pronunciation of these consonant clusters at the same time you teach the plurals, etc.
3. Encourage your student to get both consonants pronounced, even with epenthetic vowels. (See the notes to Lesson Two on epenthetic vowels.) "top-uh-suh" is more easily understood by Americans to be "tops" than is a pronunciation with one or the other of the consonants dropped.

Lesson Nineteen

Final Consonant Clusters with [z]

[bz]	[dz]	[gz]	[vz]
cab/cabs	bed/beds	bag/bags	love/loves
mob/mobs	kid/kids	dig/digs	give/gives
gab/gabs	need/needs	egg/eggs	save/saves
bib/bibs	read/reads	Greg/Greg's	olive/olives

[ðz]	[mz]	[nz]	[n͡gz]
bathe/bathes	swim/swims	son/sons	king/kings
breathe/breathes	lime/limes	pan/pans	wing/wings
clothe/clothes	come/comes	Anne/Anne's	gang/gangs
lathe/lathes	jam/jams	run/runs	song/songs

[rz]

car/cars
chair /chairs
sister/sisters
tear/tears

The bar closed early./ The bars closed early.
He sold the chair./ He sold the chairs.
It's Anne./ It's Anne's., etc.

Notes

1. See the notes to the previous lesson for the importance of these consonant clusters.
2. Note that, while the spelling system represents these final consonants as s's, they are pronounced as [z]'s.

Lesson Twenty

Final Consonant Clusters with [t]

[pt]	[kt]	[t͡ʃt]	[ft]
hope/hoped	like/liked	watch/watched	cough/coughed
type/typed	bake/baked	pitch/pitched	laugh/laughed
stop/stopped	look/looked	match/matched	goof/goofed
ship/shipped	pick/picked	latch/latched	whiff/whiffed

[θt]	[st]	[ʃt]
froth/frothed	miss/missed	wish/washed
	promise/promised	wash/washed
	pass/passed	push/pushed
	press/pressed	vanish/vanished

They hope so./ They hoped so.
We bake bread./ We baked bread., etc.

Notes

1. These consonant clusters, and the ones presented in the following lesson, are those that arise in past and perfect tenses with regular verbs. Like the clusters with [s], they present a double problem to your Lao speakers. First, they will be hard to pronounce because Lao does not have consonant clusters like them, and second, there are no suffixes in Lao, so Lao speakers will need to get used to using suffixes in English.
2. You will undoubtedly want to present this and the following lesson when you teach the past tense.
3. Note that these clusters with [t] are spelled with -ed.

Lesson Twenty-one

Final Consonant Clusters with [d]

[bd]	[gd]	[jd]
rob/robbed	beg/begged	damage/damaged
bribe/bribed	sag/sagged	rage/raged
sob/sobbed	mug/mugged	age/aged
rub/rubbed	nag/nagged	rummage/rummaged

[vd]	[ðd]	[zd]
live/lived	smooth/smoothed	use/used
save/saved	breathe/breathed	close/closed
heave/heaved	teethe/teethed	raise/raised
slave/slaved	soothe/soothed	refuse/refused

[md]	[nd]	[n͡gd]
seem/seemed	listen/listened	bang/banged
name/named	dine/dined	hang/hanged
climb/climbed	open/opened	wing/winged
bomb/bombed	sign/signed	long/longed

They listen to the records./ They listened to the records.

We raise our children./ We raised our children.

They sign the paper./ They have signed the paper. etc.

Notes

1. See the notes for the previous lesson for the importance of these clusters.

Lesson Twenty-two

Final Consonant Clusters with [l]

[lp]	[lb]	[lt]	[ld]
help	alb	belt	child
gulp	bulb	felt	old
scalp		cult	cold
kelp		smelt	mild

[lθ]	[lf]	[ls]	[l͡ch]
health	self	false	gulch
wealth	shelf	else	Welch
filth	gulf	pulse	filch
stealth	elf		belch

[lj]	[lm]
bulge	elm
indulge	calm
bilge	film
divulge	helm

His well was amazing./ His wealth was amazing.
Put the bell on the cat./ Put the belt on the cat.

Come help milk the cows in the barn.
This shelf is worn out.
I called to see when the film would start.
My child felt that the elf would help.

Notes

1. These will be difficult: no final [l]'s in Lao; no consonant clusters with [l].

Lesson Twenty-three

Final Consonant Clusters with [r]

[rp]	[rt]	[rk]	[rb]	[rd]	[rg]
harp	hurt	work	curb	card	berg
carp	court	fork	barb	board	Borg
slurp	shirt	bark	absorb	hard	
sharp	sport	shark	garb	bird	

[r͡ch]	[rj]	[rm]	[rn]	[rf]	[rv]
porch	large	arm	burn	surf	curve
lurch	barge	warm	barn	scarf	starve
arch	surge	harm	warn	turf	carve
church	splurge	alarm	corn	wharf	reserve

[rθ]	[rl]
girth	girl
birth	curl
fourth	swirl
hearth	twirl

Did they come in the car?/Did they come in the cart?

What a drafty bar!/ What a drafty barn!

He worked in a war factory./ He worked in a warm factory.

This scarf is hard to tie.

He cried when he lost the card.

His girth, at birth, caused alarm.

Work in the warm sun didn't harm him.

Notes

1. Your Lao students might substitute a lengthened vowel for the [r]. There are many dialects of English which do the same, so such substitutions will be easily understandable.
2. The [rl] clusters can be turned into two-syllable words like moral, to make them easier to handle.

Lesson Twenty-four

Other Final Consonant Clusters

[sp]	[sk]	[nθ]	[mp]
wasp	ask	month	camp
clasp	task	ninth	stamp
gasp	mask	seventh	damp
grasp	dusk	tenth	lamp

[nj]	[n͡gk]	[n͡gθ]	[nc͡h]
range	thank	length	inch
strange	drink	strength	branch
orange	think		lunch
change	link		ranch

I'll ask Frank to lunch.
Can you arrange for a change in schedules?
What's the length and strength of the desk?
His task every month is to think of strange things.
I saw an orange stamp in the damp swamp.

Notes

1. These are the more commonly-occurring of the final consonant clusters not dealt with in previous lessons. They will all be difficult for the Lao speaker, as there are no consonant clusters like them in Lao.
2. Note that any verb above can have the third person singular suffix added to it, and that any noun can be made plural; the result is often a three-consonant cluster. At this point, even English speakers start dropping consonants.

Lesson Twenty-five

Consonant Clusters with [s] at the beginnings of words

[s]	[sl]	[sp]	[st]	[sn]	[sm]
sack	slack	----	stack	snack	smack
sane	slain	Spain	stain	----	----
sill	----	spill	still	----	----
soak	----	spoke	stoke	----	smoke
sunk	slunk	spunk	stunk	----	----
----	----	spare	stare	snare	----

[sw]	[sk]
----	----
swain	skein
swill	skill
----	----
----	skunk
swear	scare

Take up the sack./ Take up the slack./ Take up the stack.

He's sane./ He's slain.

It's sunk./ It's stunk.

Don't stare at us./ Don't swear at us.

He's soaking in the tub./ He's smoking in the tub.

The skunk scared Steven.

After our snack, we smoked a cigarette.

Stephanie spoke too soon.

He's a skillful swimmer.

She slipped in the snow.

They swore they'd drive more carefully.

Slide down the slope on the sled.

The Swede skis better than the Scot.

Notes

1. There are no initial consonant clusters like these in Lao. Accept epenthetic vowels (see the notes to Lesson Two), e.g. "suh-tack" for stack.

Lesson Twenty-six

Consonant Clusters with [l] and [r] at beginnings of words

[C]	[C+l]	[C+r]
band	bland	brand
bead	bleed	breed
cash	clash	crash
caw	claw	craw
fame	flame	frame
fee	flee	free
gas	glass	grass
go	glow	grow
pants	plants	prance
pie	ply	pry
Tim	----	trim
tie	----	try

They clashed./ They crashed.
The glass is pretty./ The grass is pretty.
She's going./ She's glowing./ She's growing.
That's his favorite band./ That's his favorite brand.
Give it a tie./ Give it a try.
He bought some pants./ He bought some plants.

Blue flowers grow in the grass.
The blue bug bled blue blood.
He eats bran flakes for breakfast.
Your present was a pleasant surprise.
The cow grazed in the plain.
The plane crashed in flames.

Notes

1. Your Lao students will confuse [l] and [r] after a consonant, in addition to having trouble pronouncing the clusters. Substitution of a [w] for the [r] in these clusters is understandable, but has babyish overtones for Americans. Cf. Elmer Fudd...

Lesson Twenty-seven

Three-Consonant Clusters at beginnings of words

[spr]	[spl]	[str]	[skr]
sprain	spleen	strain	scream
spry	splash	straight	screw
spring	splurge	strong	scrub
spray	split	stride	scroll
spread	splinter	strand	screech

He strained his back./ He sprained his back.
The spring is too tight./ The string is too tight.

They splashed in the spring.
The spry old man took big strides.
The string kept the puppy from straying.
I need a strand of string.
The scream came from the square.
He screamed when she scratched him.

Notes

1. Your Lao students will probably break up these clusters with epenthetic vowels, e.g. "suh-puh-rain" for sprain. That's fine.

VI. Sources for Further Reference

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A graded presentation of the sounds of English, first individually, then in combinations, for students on any ESL level. A transcription system is used, and there are lots of exercises.

Department of the Army. Area Handbook for Laos. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972.

An extensive description of Laos, written by staff of the American University Foreign Area Studies Division to provide Army personnel with background information on Laos, its people, cultures and history.

English Language Services, Inc. Drills and Exercises in English Pronunciation. New York: Collier—Macmillan, 1971.

Texts to be used on any level. Book I deals with consonants and vowels; Book II with stress and intonation; Book III with more stress and intonation.

HEW Refugee Task Force. New Life, Lao Edition.

The refugee newspaper, which can be subscribed to for free by writing to:

New Life
HEW Refugee Task Force
Rm. 1185 Donohoe Building
330 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Be sure to ask for the Lao edition; it is published in Khmer and Vietnamese as well.

Kerr, Allen D. Lao-English Dictionary. Forest Grove, Oregon: Catholic University of America Press in association with International Scholarly Book Services, Inc., 1972. Two volumes.

An extensive, updated dictionary containing about 25,000 entries. Presentation of Lao is in both the Lao alphabet and a transcription into Roman characters.

Lebar, Frank, and Adrienne Suddar. Laos: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture. New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area File Press, 1960.

A useful general introduction to the cultures of Laos. It includes sections on history, religion, politics, daily life, education, and so on, all carefully researched and thoughtfully discussed.

Marcus, Russell. English-Lao, Lao-English Dictionary. Rutland, Vt.: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1971.

Small two-way dictionary designed for the English-speaking learner of Lao, with a brief description of the sound system and particulars of the Lao alphabet.

Nilsen, Don, and Alleen Pace Nilsen. Pronunciation Contrasts in English. New York: Regents, 1971.

A book lessons on particular pronunciation problems, with lists of languages the speakers of which will have the problems. (Lao isn't one of the languages listed.) The introduction has suggestions for teaching the lessons, and information on the phonetics of particular sounds is given with the lessons.

Noss, Richard B. Language Policy and Higher Education in Southeast Asia. UNESCO-IAU Joint Research Programme in Higher Education. London: Expedite Multiprint Ltd., 1965.

The chapter on Laos discusses the Royal Ordinance of 1962 that established guidelines for elementary and secondary education in Laos, and describes the use of French and Lao in the educational system.

Outsama, Kao. Laotian Themes. Regional Bilingual Training Resource Center, Board of Education of the City of New York. June, 1977.

A pamphlet describing Lao customs, the educational system and learning styles in Laos.

Perazic, Elizabeth. "Little Laos, Next Door to Red China," National Geographic. Vol. 117 (January, 1960), pp. 46-69.

An introduction to the country, with more domestic detail than National Geographic usually has. The author describes her daily, small adventures settling in to life in Laos, and records her impressions of the different cultures. The article was written and photographed before the war had taken extensive hold, and forms a real contrast to the White August 1961 article annotated below.

Pragmatics International, Inc. 4 Hundred Hill Street, Jackson, Michigan, 49202. Telephone number 517-782-3666.

A place where, for the cost of the xeroxing, copies of textbooks in Lao can be ordered, specifically:

1. Lao Primer (64 pp)
2. Lao First Grade Reader (152 pp)
3. Lao Second Grade Reader (240 pp)
4. Lao Third Grade Reader (264 pp)
5. Lao Science Reader, Grade Two (176 pp)
6. Lao Literature Reader, Secondary Level by Thao Kene (1963) (124pp.
7. Lao Grammar I: Orthography (Royal Lao Academy Rev. Ed.) (52 pp)
8. Lao Grammar II: Morphology (Royal Lao Academy Rev. Ed.) (100 pp)
9. Lao Grammar III: Syntax (Royal Lao Academy Rev. Ed.) (52 pp)
10. Lao Grammar IV: Poetics (Royal Lao Academy Ed.) (56 pp)

Prator, Clifford H., Jr., and Betty Wallace Robinett. Manual of American English Pronunciation. Rev. Ed. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

A manual for advanced students, built around a frequency count of UCLA foreign student errors.

Roffe, G. Edward. "The Phonemic Structure of Lao," Journal of the American Oriental Society. Vol. LXVI No. 4 (December, 1946).

A description of the interrelationship between occurrence of tones and occurrence of segmental phonemes in Lao. The dialect described is Louang Prabang.

_____. Spoken Lao, Books One and Two. Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1956. Distributed by Spoken Language Services, Ithaca, New York.

A text teaching English-speakers to speak Lao. It's out of print - for a while, it was being published by Spoken Language Services in Ithaca, New York - but a linguistics department library might have it. There's an excellent description of the alphabet at the beginning of Book Two.

White, Peter T. "Report on Laos," National Geographic. Vol. 120 (August, 1961), pp. 241-275.

A picture of Laos at war, contrasting with the picture given in Perazic article (January 1960) annotated above. White describes the American philanthropic effort, the different cultures in Laos, and the effects of "modernization" - both American and Pathet Lao - on the daily life and values of the people of Laos.

Yates, Warren G., and Souksomboun Sayasithsena. Lao Basic Course, Vols. I and II. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1970.

The text used in teaching Lao at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute.